

The Quest

The Newsletter of the Delaware Military Heritage and Education Foundation

Volume Three, Number III

Fall 2010

You won't want to miss this!

Delaware Military Heritage Weekend



Philadelphia Brigade Brass Band, performing 1:00 and 2:15 on Saturday, Oct. 23

From the sounds of brass bands to the roar of artillery, the parade grounds

at Fort DuPont in Delaware City will come alive on Saturday, October 23 and Sunday, October 24 for Delaware Military Heritage Weekend. Please join us for this free two-day journey into the rich traditions and practices of military history. Events begin with a parade in Delaware City at 10:00 on Saturday to honor our disabled veterans. The parade will wind its way through Delaware City and onto the grounds of Fort DuPont. Visitors will then be able to walk through reenactment encampments from many different time periods, see vintage military vehicles, listen to patriotic and American music, experience military maneuvers and the firing of artillery, explore the many community and civic



Coast Guard water rescue demonstrations:
Saturday morning, October 23

organizations related to military heritage, and learn about the men and women who dedicate their lives and service to protecting our freedom. Events on Saturday will run until 5:00, and the day will conclude with a flag retirement ceremony at sunset, led by the cadets of the Delaware Civil Air Patrol.

The reenactment grounds will reopen at 10:00 on Sunday morning and be open for visitors to tour until 3:00. Events on Sunday include a concert of patriotic and American music and a grand pass-and-review of all military reenactment regiments on the parade grounds.

To date, more than 30 groups representing aspects of military history and American culture have committed to attend, with more anticipated to confirm in the next month. Among the many confirmed participants to date are: members of the Vintage Military Vehicles of Delaware, the Revolutionary War Unit of the Delaware Military Academy, First State Fife & Drum Corps, the Von Donop Prussian Infantry reenactment unit, the Fort Delaware Mortar Unit (Civil War), the 261st Coastal Artillery (WW II) reenactment unit, and the 168th Medical Station reenactment unit, recalling a crucial role that African American soldiers played during WW II. ***A more complete schedule of events can be found on page 2.***

We would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their support with this event:

Delaware Health & Human Services Department, ShopRite, The Delaware Division on the Arts, Delaware River and Bay Authority, Salem County-Delaware City Three Forts Ferry Coalition, Delaware National Guard, Delaware State Parks, and Delaware Civil Air Patrol

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Executive Director's Letter

Greetings to all of our members, friends and supporters. The Delaware Military Heritage & Education Foundation has had a busy summer, with members of our dedicated board and volunteers actively engaging in strategic planning to chart our future path—we'll be unveiling our new Mission and Vision in the next newsletter. In the meantime, our Education Committee has been busy drafting a diverse slate of education programs for the fall of 2010 and 2011, and our Membership Committee is in the process of upgrading and revising our databases to allow us to better stay in touch with you. Thanks to everyone who has given time, thought and effort to this vital work.

I invite all of our readers to join us for Delaware Military Heritage Weekend. It should be an exciting, engaging and educational experience with something for everyone. Our small state has a rich history connected to military service, military bases and fortification, and military technology, and we'll be touching on facets of all of it.

As Veteran's Day approaches, please remember those men and women serving overseas, putting themselves in harm's way in service to their country. We thank them for their dedication.



Stephanie Przybylek
Executive Director

Dates to Remember:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| September 11 | Patriot Day |
| September 14 | DMHEF Board Meeting, 5:00 PM |
| October 12 | DMHEF Board Meeting, 5:00 PM |
| October 23-24 | Delaware Military Heritage Weekend |
| November 9 | DMHEF Board Meeting, 5:00 PM |
| November 11 | Veteran's Day; screening of
Voices of War |
| December 5 | Christmas Reception, 4:00–6:00 PM,
location and details to follow |

Upcoming Events

Delaware Militia in the Revolutionary War

~ lecture by Wade P. Catts

September 29, 7:00 PM

Brandywine Hundred Library

Join us for this exploration of Delaware's militia contribution to the fight for independence, highlighting recent research on the subject. Wade Catts is a Historical Archeologist and Associate Director of the Cultural Resources Department for John Milner Associates, a historic preservation and cultural resources service firm with offices in Philadelphia and West Chester.

Voices of War: Delawareans in World War II

November 10, Theater N, Wilmington

10:00 AM, students/schools reception

5:30 PM, public reception

6:00 PM, public viewing

On a day when we honor the service of our veterans, join the DMHEF for a screening of Voices of War, the documentary by TJ Healy II about the service and experiences of Delaware servicemen and women during WW II. Produced by Nenagh Films and Black Sheep Production Co., written by Alison Mackenzie and Michael E. Harkins. Thanks to the City of Wilmington and the Buccini Pollin Group.

Delaware Military Heritage Weekend Schedule of Events

Saturday, October 23

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 10:00 | Parade begins near Crabby Dicks in Delaware City and ends at Fort DuPont |
| 10:00 – 5:00 | Reenactment encampments on the parade ground open for visitors |
| 10:00 – 5:00 | Community and civic group information tents and exhibits open |
| TBD | Coast Guard drills on the water (with a USCG HH-65 Dauphin helicopter) |
| 11:30 – 5:00 | Artillery demonstrations and military maneuvers every half hour |
| 11:30 & 2:00 | Performances of "Abraham Lincoln with the Troops" (Civil War play) |
| 1:00 & 2:15 | Performances by the Philadelphia Brigade Brass Band |
| 3:15 | Covenant Brass Quintet, "Sounds of America" |
| 7:30 PM | Sunset Flag Retirement Ceremony, led by Delaware Civil Air Patrol |

Sunday, October 24

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 10:00 – 3:00 | Reenactment encampments open to the public |
| 1:00 – 2:00 | Concert, patriotic and American music |
| 2:00 | Grand Pass-and-Review of military units and vehicles on the parade grounds |
| 3:00 | Event concludes |

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The Quest is published by the Delaware Military Heritage & Education Foundation. Address ideas for submissions, questions and correspondence to Editor, DMHEF, First Regiment Road, Wilmington, DE 19808, or email us at www.MilitaryHeritage.org.

Collections Highlights: Help Solve a Mystery

Among the materials recently donated to the DMHEF is a collection of slides and photographs taken in country during the Vietnam War. Several years ago, a Newark resident gave the collection to the Lt. J. Allison O' Daniel VFW Post 475 in Newark, saying that they were done by a military photographer and, although she didn't have much information about them, she couldn't bear to throw them away. Recently, post member Larry Waters contacted the DMHEF and asked if we would be interested in them.

These images include scenes of young servicemen in moments of repose, men returning from the immediate aftermath of battle, and views of Vietnamese residents and the surrounding countryside. A few photographs include location names and partial individuals' names written on them; some were taken at the CAM-LE Bridge in Da Nang on August 23, 1968. We don't know the extent of the connection these images may have to Delaware, but they certainly reflect the contributions of American soldiers during conflict at a difficult time in our country's history—we would like to better document them and the events and individuals they portray. Give us a call or email if you'd like to help.



Vietnamese boy watching a serviceman shaving. This is one examples of the candid shots included in this collection.



Typed caption on back of photo: "CAM-LE Bridge Danang 23 Aug 68 Marines and the ARVN Rangers returning from heavy action across the river, heading for the center of town shortly after the VC had forced fire trucks to withdraw." (CB-3, 7706)

***We always welcome your
comments, questions, and suggestions.***

***We have a new email address, and you can
contact us at info@demilitaryheritage.org***

OUR MISSION

The Delaware Military Heritage and Education Foundation Inc. collects and preserves material evidence associated with Delaware related military units and individuals of the uniformed services of the State and the United States, and interprets it so that coming generations will understand the values of courage, loyalty and responsibility that inspire such service.

Vinyard Shipyard

Connections to Delaware's military history can be found throughout the state. A site with one of the more interesting but perhaps less known stories sits quietly along the scenic banks of the Mispillion River in Milford, Delaware.

In 1896 Milford was a bustling downstate shipbuilding center. Wilson M. Vinyard, a Milford native who had returned to Delaware after working as an engineer for the city of Chicago and building ships in Wisconsin, established the Vinyard Shipbuilding Company along East Front Street. His son, Wilson S. "Sonny" Vinyard, joined the company in 1915 following his graduation from Drexel. Vinyard Shipbuilding Company built pleasure and civilian craft, and ships for the government, holding contracts with the Department of the Navy between 1917 and 1944. The company developed a reputation for fine woodwork and its growing list of vessels averaged 90-115 feet in length.

During World War I, Vinyard Shipbuilding Co. built subchasers and military-use tugboats. Following war's end, and with the advent of the United State's experiment with Prohibition, Vinyard was contracted to build ten 75-foot Coast Guard patrol boats that were used to intercept bootlegging activity during Prohibition. The cutters were also called "Six Bitters" because of their engines (two six-cylinder 400 horsepower gasoline Sterling engines). The price per boat in late 1924 - early 1925 was \$24,770. Such lucrative government contracts brought money into the Milford economy. Today, a single example of a Vinyard Coast Guard vessel still exists, used as a private yacht in Washington State. Throughout the 1930s, the company built eight styles of cruising yachts with elegant woodwork and finishes and a gasoline or diesel engine.

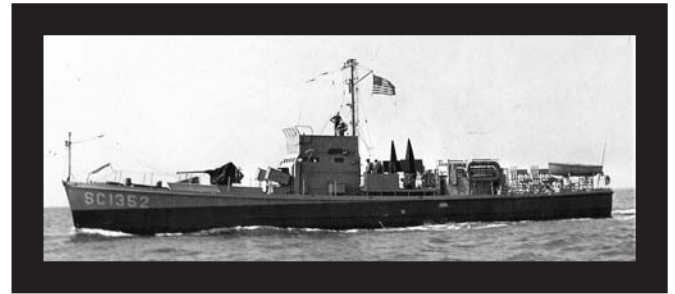
But with the advent of World War II, Vinyard shifted completely to building ships used for war. The Milford industry played a role in what *Ship Defense News*, a Navy publication of the period, termed "the greatest shipbuilding race in history." Vinyard did their part for the war effort by building fourteen wooden subchasers of two classes: the SC497 Class (110' by 17' by 6'6" with twin 1540 horsepower combined engines) and the SC1466 Class (110'6" by 18'7" x 5'1" with 1200 horsepower gasoline engines). Between 1941 and 1944 the company's labor force grew to 120 employees who



Sign from Vinyard Shipbuilding Co., ca. 1945, still at the original site. Collection of Sudler and Joan Lofland

worked around the clock. The local press noted each launch of a new vessel with patriotic pride: "The Submarine Chaser 1352 was launched at the yards of the

Vinyard Shipbuilding Company, this city, on Wednesday morning, April 21," noted an article in the *Milford Chronicle*. "The beautiful streamlined craft left the ways at exactly 11:30 o' clock. " Among the attendees at this launch were Mrs. W. F. Cope, wife of the U. S. Navy Inspector of Machinery, Lieutenant and Mrs. Edward Deckerhoff of the U. S. Navy Reserve and the 5th grade class from Milford Elementary School accompanied by their teachers.



Subchaser 1352, launched April 21, 1942 in Milford, Delaware. Commissioned on June 18, 1942. According to Robert D. Sonney, a veteran who served on the ship, SC 1352 patrolled the Atlantic, escorting ships from Cuba and the Bahamas to New York.

Subchasers and similar size vessels were referred to as the Navy's "Mighty Mites" because of their swift striking power and maneuverability despite their small stature. The Navy authorized rapid production of them to counteract the threat posed by German U boats terrorizing ships in the Atlantic. Because they were made of wood, subchasers were also sometimes called "the Splinter Fleet." More than 40,000 sailors served on subchasers during World War II, mostly in coastal waters. Vinyard's subchasers SC 520 served in the Hawaiian Sea Frontier, escorting naval vessels and performing soundings for Japanese submarines around the Hawaiian Islands.

Joan and Sudler Lofland purchased the site of Vinyard Shipbuilding Company in 1996. As they gathered information, learned more about the rich history of the site, and spoke to people who remembered the shipyard, materials related to Vinyard and its workers began to come back to them, including issues of industry newspapers published during the war years, given to them by the son of a former Vinyard employee. These publications, meant for the shipyard workers at factories large and small across the US, provide a window into the time and the cause:

"Give us guns and ships and tanks they say
Give us powder, shot and planes today
We want them now – not next year,
To all of us our freedom is dear."

One stanza of a poem sent to the paper by a shipyard worker, published in Full Speed Ahead, a wartime industry newspaper published by the US Navy, March 23, 1942.

The Loflands have worked diligently to preserve Vinyard's story. They have restored several of Vinyard's vessels, including the yachts *Kismet* and *Vignette*. This past June, they celebrated the relaunch of the yacht *Augusta*. The Loflands maintain the boathouse, joiner shop and machine shop that once hummed with activity on the Vinyard property—walking through these spaces gives a tangible sense of the work, smells, and activity related to the construction of wooden vessels, and they echo with the sounds of wartime production connected to Delaware's military history.



Crew of Subchaser 1352, 1943-45

Note: Want to learn more about Vinyard Shipyard?

Thanks to funds from the Delaware Humanities Forum, a traveling exhibit has been created exploring the shipyard, the vessels manufactured there, and shipbuilding in Milford. The exhibit will make a stop in Delaware City during Delaware Military Heritage Weekend.

FCCLA members with teacher Mrs. GERALYN DRIES. These juniors from



Smyrna High School participated in the DMHEF's 2nd annual Student Leadership Seminar on May 26, held at the Delaware National Guard Smyrna Readiness Center, where students engaged in a day of discussion and learning about leadership challenges and opportunities.

DMHEF Recent Program Highlights



A moment of reflection on the faces of Delaware Civil Air Patrol cadets during a May Flag Retirement Ceremony at Fort DuPont.

Learning first-hand about the 166th Airlift Wing, Delaware National Air Guard. A group from the DMHEF tours a C-130 Hercules, a vital workhorse for troop transport and support. From left: Stephanie Przybylek, Gen. Jon Reynolds, Peg



Tigue, Don DeWees, Gen. Hugh Broomall, and Augusta Gladd.

Edgar A. Thronson Foundation pledges \$40,000 to DMHEF

We are very pleased to add the Edgar A. Thronson Foundation to our list of supporters, all the more so because of Mr. Thronson's connections to Delaware military history. Edgar Thronson attended Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin for two years before transferring to the University of Wisconsin, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa as a chemical engineer in 1929. Following graduation, he worked for R. H. Chemical Company in Niagara Falls, which was later purchased by E. I. DuPont Nemours & Company. Thronson transferred to duPont's headquarters in Wilmington in 1943 and retired after 37 years of service in 1966. During World War II, Thronson was on loan to the US Government, serving with the Office of Strategic Services (the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency) from 1943 through early 1945. Thronson later managed patents and contracts for DuPont.

Thanks to Our Funders, Sponsors and Supporters

Many organizations, businesses and individuals continue to support our efforts.

We express thanks for their support.

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Edgar A. Thronson Foundation
DE National Guard Retired Officers Association
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Gifts/Memorials:

Bill Duncan, memorial gift in honor of
BG (DE) (Ret) Richard M. Walsh, Sr.

Bill Duncan, memorial gift in honor of
Sgt Wendell Howell, Sr.

Bill Duncan, memorial gift in honor of
CW5 John V. Hawkins, Sr.

JOIN OUR QUEST!

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE THE DMHEF

The Delaware Military Heritage & Education Foundation is a private nonprofit organization that preserves Delaware's military history by collecting artifacts and archival materials, sponsoring lectures and seminars, gathering oral histories and working toward our goal of opening the Delaware Military Museum. Your help makes a difference. Please consider becoming a member or giving a membership as a gift.

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LEVELS OF SUPPORT

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